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The Overture.

From an unpublished poem: "Satan", a Libretto.

BY C. F. CRANCH.

Had I—instead of unsonorous words—
The skill that moves in airy melodies
And modulations of entrancing chords
Through mystic mazes of all harmonies,—
The sounding pulses of an Overture
Whose grand orchestral movement might allure
The listener's soul through chaos and through night
And seeming dissonance, to concord and to light,
I would allow the harsh Titanic strains
To wrestle with Apollo and with Jove;
The savage war-cry on barbaric plains
To affright the chords of wisdom and of love.
For still the evolutions of old Time,
Amid the wrecks in wild confusion hurled,
Would move with grander rhythm and nobler rhyme
Along the eternal order of the world;
The swift contending fugue,—the wild escape
Of passions—long-drawn wail and sudden blast—
And heavy-footed bass should weave and shape
The prelude of a symphony so vast
That only to the ears
Of spirits listening from the lofty spheres
Of thought, the differing tones would blend and twine
Into the semblance of a work divine.

I would unloose the soul beneath the wings
Of every instrument;
I would enlist the deep-complaining strings
Of doubt and discontent;
The low sad mutterings and entangled dreams,
Of viols and bassoons,
Groping for light athwart the clouds and streams
That drown the laboring moons;—
The tones of crude half-truth—the good within
The mysteries of evil and of sin;
The trumpet cries of anger and despair;
The mournful marches of the muffled drums;
The bird-like flute-notes leaping into air,
Ere the great human-heavenly music comes
Emerging from the dark, with bursts of song
And hope and victory, delayed too long.

Ah, what are all the discords of all time
But stumbling steps of one persistent life
That struggles up through mists to heights sublime
Fore-felt through all creation's lingering strife,—
The deathless motion of one tender tone
Whose deep vibrations thrill from God to God alone!

Translated for Dwight's Journal of Music.

From Hauptmann's Letters to Hause.*

I.

FROM THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

... By the kindness of their possessors, I saw before me a collection of about 800 letters, out of which to make a selection. It would have been easy to take from this abundance a satisfactory number of most interesting letters without regard to order of time or of receivers. But after mature reflection I decided to make this selection merely from the letters addressed to FRANZ HAUSER. For the collection of Hauptmann's letters to him, numbering more than 400, is by far the most complete, and, beginning from the year 1825, embraces a period of over 40 years. And just in these letters we find a more faithful image of a life outwardly so simple, but so rich in its internal develop-

ment and labor, than any biographer could possibly portray. To the oldest and most trusted of his friends he could feel secure against all misinterpretation; to him he opens without reserve the inmost stirrings of his deep and noble moral and intellectual life, the most striking, fine and penetrating judgments on the past and present of music and its representatives. Thus we are indebted to these letters for a series of the most acute and subtle judgments about his teacher and friend Louis Spohr, which, if they were united in one whole, would give a complete character picture of that excellent man and artist, and, with a just appreciation of his excellences, also draw the limits within which his power of achievement was enclosed.

Another difficulty was involved in the work of selection. Of 438 letters to Hauser I give only 193, and scarcely one of these entire. Of course, in such a fruitful correspondence only a part can be of general importance; in confidential letters much must be purely personal, in which the public can have little interest, and certainly no right. Meaning in the publication to do justice to two points of view, I have included in the first place all that relates to important experiences of Hauptmann, and have sought, in this way, to construct a sketch of his life out of his own words. To this belongs also a great number of more or less penetrating remarks upon the inner and outer world, in which the singular man lived,—expressions, which are the more valuable, that they not only give, when taken together, the ground features of an extremely individual and attractive way of looking at the world, but at the same time they stand in the closest and most inseparable connection with Hauptmann's artistic views, particularly in the field of music. Here, too, everything has been preserved which has relation to Hauptmann's own compositions, seldom as the modest artist allows himself more than a simple word about his works. But he is inexhaustible in more or less extended, but always intelligent expositions of the nature, the problems and the means of music, and of its historical development; as well as in luminous and well considered judgments about single musical works, and the artistic significance of individual musicians of the past and present. I have also felt it my duty to let, not only the admiring recognition, but also the justly judging and sometimes condemning earnestness of the critic speak in its own way.

Finally I have included nearly all the longer or shorter expositions of musical Theory, which accompany Hauptmann's epoch-making work on "Harmonik und Metrik," from its first beginnings, lying far back in time, to its final completion. The importance of the book required no less,—a book which has shared the fate of many another path-breaking work, of first finding in its results that imperishable and decisive effect, which seems to be denied it as a book. And for the very reason that Haupt-

mann is so hard to understand and follow in his "Harmonik," and that very few musicians own the work, and fewer still have read and understood it, while many of its results have already become generally recognized and accepted, I have been unwilling to omit some theoretic chapters, in which the friendly tone of a letter has lent the author that simplicity, clearness and transparency, which is so painfully wanting in his scientific book. Those who had the good fortune to be Hauptmann's pupils, will find again, with grateful emotions, in these chapters as in some other letters, a most faithful reflection of that peculiarly quickening method of instruction which the master had developed in his nearly fifty years experience as a teacher.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE TWO MEN.

MORITZ HAUPTMANN was born in Dresden, Oct. 13, 1792. His father was chief government architect and knew how to unfold the rich gifts of his son by careful, excellent instruction. The musical bias expressed itself early in the boy; but until his 19th year he was engaged mainly in the technical training of an architect; mathematics, natural sciences and languages were zealously pursued at the same time. Without doubt it was precisely his familiarity with architecture which proved of incalculable use to Hauptmann for his later labors in the theory of music, to say nothing of the fine understanding for plastic Art, which he owed in great part to these youthful studies. At the age of 19 he turned his full attention to music, and went in 1811 to Gotha, where he received instruction from Spohr in violin playing and in composition. Already in the following year he entered the Dresden Court orchestra as violinist, and in 1813 he was in the same position for some months in the Vienna theatre orchestra, during which time he had much intercourse with Weber, Meyerbeer and Spohr, who then held there the position of Kapellmeister.

Returning to Dresden in 1815 he took the situation of music teacher in the house of the Russian prince Repnin, and in this capacity he lived for five years long in Moscow, Pultawa, Odessa and Petersburg. He returned again to Dresden in 1820; but in 1822 his teacher and friend Spohr, who in the meantime had become Kapellmeister in Cassel, induced him to join the Electoral *Kapelle* as orchestral violinist, and for twenty years the important man remained there in that humble position. But his name soon became known in wider circles. His two grand Masses, several Sonatas for Violin and Piano, Violin Duets, some sacred choral works (among them a celebrated *Salve Regina*), an Opera "Mathilde," secular vocal music for one and several voices (as, for example, the Petrarch Sonnets, *Amor timido*, the Anacreontics, &c.), and some smaller piano pieces, found, if not a quick and general response, yet a decided

* Briefe von MORITZ HAUPTMANN, Kantor und Musikdirektor an der Thomasschule zu Leipzig, an FRANZ HAUSER. Herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. ALFRED SCHOENE. 2 Vols., Leipzig, 1871.

recognition among the best and soundest musicians, and gradually gathered about his name a small but steadily growing congregation of admirers and friends of his music.

Not less recognition did he find as teacher in the theory of music. Over 300 pupils owe to him their education; and it was during those continued labors that his own ingenious view of the nature of musical theory developed itself, as afterwards embodied in his book (*"Natur der Harmonik und Metrik,"* Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1853) and in several smaller treatises connected with it. He gradually gained the reputation of the most important theorist and teacher of his time; and when in 1842 the office, through Sebastian Bach forever consecrated, of Cantor at the Thomas School in Leipzig became vacant, it was through Mendelssohn's influence particularly, that Hauptmann was called to this post of honor, and at the same time appointed teacher in the new Conservatorium. With prompt resolution Hauptmann left the still abode of Cassel, which he had only interrupted by a journey to Italy in 1829 and a visit to Paris in 1842. He was accompanied to his new home by his wife Susette, (daughter of the Academy Director Hummel in Cassel), whom he had married in 1841. On the 12th of September, 1842, he entered upon his Leipzig office. Happy in the union with his wife, whose rich talents in music and in pictorial art* adorned his house, and in the possession of three children; in friendly intimacy with a circle of like-minded noble families, in personal intercourse and correspondence with a series of the most prominent men in art and science, beloved and honored by the daily increasing company of pupils, he had allotted to him still 25 full blessed years of unimpaired activity. It was not until the end of the year 1866, shortly after a beautiful celebration of his silver wedding, that a bodily infirmity set in, which rapidly increased and made the latter period of his life a painful one. On the 3d of January, 1868, he closed his weary eyes forever. But he lives forever in the memory of his family and friends as one of the best and most important men our country has produced.

Hauptmann's friend, FRANZ HAUSER, was born on the 12th of January, 1794, at Krasowitz near Prague. He received a complete gymnasial education and began to study jurisprudence, afterwards medicine. But after cultivating himself musically in a private way, he was led, by his excellent voice, his talent and his love for music, to devote himself to the career of a singer, and in 1817 he made his first appearance on the stage. He soon became known as a distinguished Basso and Baritone, and he was in Cassel in 1821, Dresden in 1825, Vienna in 1828, London and Leipzig in 1832, and Berlin in 1835. In the year 1837 he went to Italy and Paris, in 1838 to Vienna as a teacher of singing, and from 1846 to 1864 he was Director of the Conservatorium at Munich. He employed his leisure in the preparation of his excellent School of Singing for teachers and singers (Leipzig, 1866). He has trained a succession of the best singers, such as Henrietta Sonntag, Frau Vogl in Munich, Joseph Hauser,

* The fine likeness of Hauptmann prefixed to the "Lectures" is photographed from a portrait executed by his wife.

Staudigl, von Milde in Weimar; he was also at times the artistic counsellor of Jenny Lind.

But of his intellectual worth the letters addressed to him by Hauptmann furnish the best proof. His friends agree that he was alike distinguished by a sterling, energetic character, and by a comprehensive and sound culture. His excellent collection of manuscripts of Bach, (he wrote out a complete *catalogue raisonnée* of Bach's works), a not unimportant collection of works of plastic art, and above all his intimate intercourse with persons like Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Ludwig Tieck, Carus, Spohr, Hauptmann, Mendelssohn, C. M. von Weber, Schelble, Seydelmann, Jenny Lind, Otto Jahn, &c., show that he was a man of no ordinary consequence. After he was pensioned off he removed in 1865 to Carlsruhe, and in 1867, after the death of his wife, to Freiburg in the Breisgau, where he died on the 14th of August, 1870, in his seventy-seventh year. His numerous letters which have been preserved are worthy of the highest consideration; certain it is, that a great richness of soul and of artistic experience is recorded in them, and that they form a valuable fund of material for the musical history of the last 70 years.

Bach's Christmas Music.

From the Orchestra, London.

Sebastian Bach spent his life in giving his Church—the Lutheran Church—a series of large anthems for choir and orchestra, each anthem specially designed to illustrate the service of the day. No religious community has a greater variety, none of a more exalted character. Bach never made an oratorio; he never dreamt of composing music for the fasts and festivals of the Church to be sung and played in concert rooms for his own gain or for the gain of any other person. It was not enough for Sebastian Bach to clothe the ordinary anthem of the season with the spirit of music; the old familiar words so long in use in the Catholic Church need strengthening and expanding, and bringing home to the affections and fears of the congregation. Each season must be a means of confirming faith, increasing love, quickening devotion, and above all afford opportunity for the confession of any kind of misdoing and shortcoming. Let the choir sing the words, "Jubilare Deo, omnis terra: cantate, et exultate, et psallite. Jubilate Deo omnis terra: servite Domino in letitia," and all this brilliant light is cast into deep shadow by such words as "Peccavimus cum patribus nostris; injuste egimus, iniquitatem fecimus." Indeed it is Bach's ordinary custom to place a "miserere" or "ampliās lava," in juxtaposition with his "Osannas" and "Alleluias." Bach, like Handel, kept a poet, perhaps more distinguished for piety than poetry. The versifier was thoroughly familiar with phrases of experimental religion, and in treating his themes uses the plainest and simplest expressions. In their proper place acknowledgments anent backslidings, determinations to avoid temptation, and prayers for diligence, patience, and perseverance are proper and becoming exercises. But these themes are out of place when associated with the songs of "Peace on earth, good will to men." They do not combine with the sweet and yet devout carols of the crib and the grange.

The anthems and arias composed by Sebastian Bach for Christmas Day, the Sunday after Christmas, the Feast of the Circumcision, the New Year, and the Epiphany—in fact the special musical portions of the first twelve days of the Christmas season—have been put together and called the Christmas Oratorio, or oratorio for Christmas. There cannot be the slightest

doubt that Handel took his notion of the oratorio of the "Messiah" from the music composed by Sebastian Bach for Christmas, Epiphany, the Passion, and Easter. There are many passages in the "Messiah" that prove Handel must have read and studied the Christmas and Passion music of his great contemporary. There is nothing in the mere fact of Handel setting the old antiphons of the ecclesiastical year, and the suggestion would have been, and was, very grateful to the High Churchman—Charles Jennens. To Handel the setting of these antiphons by our cathedralists would be very disquieting, and he must have foreseen the time when his own music would take the place of all in use on these occasions in his day. And his great common sense told him that any such exhibition in England of the confessional as disfigured the pure limpid flow of Bach's settings would meet with disfavor, and defeat the intentions of both the composer and his patron. In this country the combination of "De profundis" with the "Benedictus qui venit" were opposing chimes, and the rosy hours of Christmas were not to be spent in such struggle or such strife.

It is difficult to settle upon what to do with this Christmas music by Sebastian Bach, so as to give it a chance of ordinary success in this country. The joyous portion of the music is exuberant in its merry jollity. The enchantment of its rapture is amazing. Much of it is grand processional music—ringing of bells, chanting of multitudes, glory of loud trumpets, the organ peal, and everything that is beautiful in voice and instrument, is gathered together by the great artist to give benediction and thanksgiving to this Queen of Festivals. Bach in this Christmas music follows the plan of the Passion music. There are the Evangelists S. Luke and S. Matthew, who give the historical facts: then there is the *Chorus* which sings the joy-psalms, and the company of penitents who make the shadow to all this sunlight. The opening chorus for Christmas morn is brief, but bright and triumphant over every fear and foe. We see the church all decked with flowers and the glad murmur of the loving salutation: "Christ is born—a merry Christmas unto all." Then follows a fine aria addressed to the Church as a bride to be prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom. To this is appended a choral for the congregation; and once for all, we may say that this Christmas music abounds with chorals, the finest of their class. Passing by a clever movement—a choral for all the soprani—interwoven with a recitative for a prophet or priest, and a dignified bass aria, we come to a rendering of Luther's well-known Christmas hymn, well arranged for the congregation, and gorgeously accompanied by rebeccs, hautbois, and trumpets. Number ten is the pastoral symphony, and a wonderful symphony it is, ever moving onward in solemn mysteries of phrase and combinations. Bach sets the texts "And there were shepherds abiding in the field;" "Behold I bring you tidings of great joy;" "And this shall be a sign to you," in the same manner as Handel—the recitative unaccompanied, but they are mixed up with chorals and arias addressed to the shepherds in general invitations for them to go and see the New Wonder. Now comes in the cradle song—the lullaby, or "*Schlafe mein Lieb*" which from its length, character and configuration the composer clearly intended to make a principal figure in his work; it is a most charming song, and magnificently treated in its accompaniment. After this we have the recitatives "And suddenly there was with the Angel," "Glory to God on high, peace on earth, good will to men." This chorus is from the spontaneous effusion of the heart, and is wonderful for its grandeur and its joy. Alongside this noble composition the "Gloria in Excelsis" of ordinary composers will appear the merest commonplace and almost sickening rubbish. The whole scene for its purity and strength, its fixed and determinate character, and for its genuine spirit of enthusiasm and devotion, is without its

match; nevertheless, for plainness and simplicity, and yet for its highly imaginative character, its exultations of joy, and wonderful calm of peace, the Handel chorus may well and truly take its place alongside that of Bach: they are both glorious settings of the old Hymn of Christendom. Another bright chorus succeeds, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem," with one or two appropriate chorals. Then follows some music in shadow, and the scene closes with another choral.

The fourth portion of this Christmas music is that for the New Year's Day, or Circumcision. It opens with an extended movement for the chorus, and containing so many excellent and useful ideas as to be a mine of wealth to unconscious plunderers. Now is an intermezzo of twilight, a panorama of experimental religion, some of which, though highly spiritually minded, is singular and curious. The dialogue-solo touching the fear of death, with a voice in echo running through it—in fact making the solo here and there a duet—is altogether a novelty; and so also is the next movement, an arioso founded on a choral with an undercurrent for a bass voice, partly in duet, partly in recitative. Number forty-one is an aria for a tenor voice, and here we have the Handel chorus, "For He shall purify the sons of Levi." Handel wrote his chorus first as an Italian duet; but we rather think Bach stands first in order of time. The scene concludes with a choral.

The anthem for the Sunday after the New Year consists of a long, bright chorus, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord." It is followed by recitatives, chorals, and aria. The aria has been taken great pains with, and is the dark shade in the picture. After this we have Herod, the Wise men, and the Three Kings. Then follows a most beautiful and unusual subjective character, and this scene closes with a choral.

The sixth and last part is for the Feast of the Epiphany—Twelfth Day. It opens with a long, bright, and noble chorus, and a wonderful song in Bach's closest and most elaborate way for a soprano. From its introductory symphony, and its long processional-like termination, Bach has made it the great feature of the anthem; nor is the tenor song in B minor of a less remarkable tone. Then we have the offerings of the Three Kings, and the Offertory Choral, which is no other than the tune known in this country as "Luther's Hymn," and commonly sung to the words: "Great God! what do I see and hear!" The Epiphany ends with another Lutheran choral, known among us as being attached to the hymn: "O Sacred Head once wounded." It is beautifully accompanied by the orchestra in Bach's best manner, and testifies that these old chorals are somewhat like the chameleon, varied in their hues, and open to any change of composers' atmosphere. This Christmas music is about to be produced, and will no doubt prove a welcome addition to the repertoire of our Biblical dramas.

Macfarren's "St. John the Baptist."

[From the London Daily Telegraph.]

It is a strange thing that John the Baptist has not often attracted the notice of musical composers in search of a subject. No more remarkable personage, with one great exception, figures in Bible history than he whom the Master described as "more than a prophet." His striking appearance, stern asceticism, wrathful denunciation of "wickedness in high places," and tragic fate—not to speak of his relation to One whose shoes he professed himself unworthy to loose—throw his form into bold relief, and mark him as of heroic proportions. Yet, save that he holds a subordinate place in a very limited number of works, among which is Sir Julius Benedict's *St. Peter*, the great forerunner has been passed over till now. At length, however, in that "fulness of time" which ever brings forth the best results, the Man and his Life have found a musical illustrator. There is now an oratorio of *John the Baptist*—a work worthy its theme, and to which the stamp of enthusiastic approval has been affixed by the unanimous verdict by an audience competent to judge.

Dr. E. G. Monk, the librettist associated with Mr. Macfarren, had a comparatively easy task in the selection and arrangement of his materials. He suffered from no *conflatus de rebus*, and the few recorded incidents of the Baptist's life are so clear in their outline, and so plain in their signification, that grave mistakes were scarcely possible. But so far as latitude was permitted, Dr. Monk used it with sound judgment. The book is divided into two parts, each named after the place where the scene is laid, the first being styled "The Desert," the second "Machaerus," while the incidents are John's preaching to the people, the baptism of Christ, and the events which, beginning with Herod's birthday supper, ended with the execution of the Prophet. John is thus shown in his threefold capacity: as the herald of the "Kingdom of Heaven," as the uncompromising champion of righteousness, and as the witness of truth even unto death. No thing could be more simple or more definite than this, and the discreteness it evinces is shown also by the manner in which the characters are treated. John, of course, is the central figure. He stands out, clothed with all the noble attributes accredited to him in the Bible—"stern and inflexible in his teaching, yet bowing before Him whose message he had to promulgate." A halo of grandeur surrounds the ascetic of the desert as he hurls anathemas upon the corruptors of Israel: or as, in the true spirit of the ancient prophets of his race, he rebukes Herod under the roof of that monarch's palace. No greater hero could a musician wish for as a source of inspiration, or as a means of exciting interest. Next to John stands the weak and voluptuous King—a contrast as marked in character as in outward circumstance. The impulsive temperament of Herod is well brought out. One instant he resents John's boldness, and significantly exclaims "If I command to kill, they kill;" the next he trembles before his rebuker, and promises to amend his life. The rashness of the fatal vow to Salome, and the bitter but unavailing repentance to which it led, are also put well forward, while in matters of detail extreme care is taken to make the contrast of Prophet and King as great as circumstances permit. The part of Salome, who is the only other dramatic person, contains no more amplification of the Bible narrative than was exacted by the necessities of musical treatment. In structure the libretto is partly dramatic partly narrative; the dramatic form being employed in all the chief scenes; and, as little use is made of "Greek chorus," the story marches without the halting rendered necessary by efforts to "improve" its incidents as they arise. On the whole, Mr. Macfarren has been extremely fortunate in the book of his oratorio.

It is long since a work by an English composer excited interest equal to that which was gratified on Thursday morning.* Mr. Macfarren is so well known not only as a skilled musician, but as a man of intellect, that an expectation of something uncommon was universal. It was felt on all hands that *John the Baptist* would neither be a reflection of other people's ideas, nor a wild attempt to gain originality at the expense of art; but rather that in it art would be associated with independent thought and intellectual strength. These anticipations are fully justified by the result. *John the Baptist* is a work *sui generis*. I do not say that every passage is free from the charge of calling up reminiscences; but it cannot be denied that Mr. Macfarren's oratorio, in general treatment, and in most of its structural details, belong exclusively to himself. Everywhere there is evidence, not alone of a masterly hand, but of a thinking brain, and the association has produced results which are an honor to English music, and a valuable addition to artistic treasures. The overture having been more than once noticed already, I need only speak of it here in order to say that Thursday morning's performance made its skilful construction more evident, and, associated with the work as a whole, impressed its significance more strongly upon the mind. It is, indeed, a masterful and beautiful prelude—masterful in its strong, Beethoven-like grasp of subject, and beautiful with all the beauty of true melody. The overture is followed by a chorus, "Behold, I will send my messenger," in which there are points of surpassing interest. The iteration of the word "Behold!" the charmingly expressive fugue, with organ accompaniment, on the clause, "And He shall turn the heart of the fathers," &c.; the solemnity of the vocal unison (monotone) at "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," and the reiteration of "Behold!" by way of *coda*—all these things show the same powerful hand which revealed itself in the overture. The

*At the Bristol Musical Festival.

Narrator (contralto) describes in recitative the coming of John, associated with which, as an orchestral prelude, is a phrase of ancient Church melody—the same as that used by Mendelssohn in his *Reformation* symphony and elsewhere. This phrase is attendant upon the Prophet afterwards, and is sometimes used in a separate form to suggest its personality.

The Prophet now himself appears as the preacher of the Desert, his warnings and entreaties being the subject of a baritone song, "Repent ye; the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In its general style this solo suggests the strength and vigor of the Baptist's character, though there are passages which combine tenderness with fervidness to a remarkable degree. The orchestration throughout is interesting, and some of the vocal phrases—notably one upon the words, "We have Abraham to our Father," are characteristic enough to suggest that the composer adopted them as he adopted the Church theme. The next number consists of a dramatic scene, wherein John is questioned as to his person and mission by various classes of his hearers. A chorus of people, "What shall we do then?" is, perhaps, too calmly beautiful for an expression of anxious inquiry. Musically, however, it has no small attraction, and connoisseurs will notice with special approval a canon "on the second" for sopranos and tenors. The subsequent dialogue goes on with an interest heightened by the occasional introducing of the Church melody and of themes from the overture, among which the lovely second subject is conspicuous. The entire incident, moreover, receives treatment marked by great dignity of style. There is no vulgar bluster, even in the utterances of the Pharisees; and the fact is not permitted to be forgotten that a great and solemn purpose animates the chief act in the drama. The dialogue chorus is followed by a song for the Prophet, "I indeed baptize you with water," some passages in which must have been written under the influence of Mendelssohn—that, above the rest, wherein are recalled certain features of Stephen's recitative, "Men, brethren, and fathers" (*St. Paul*)—but the air is not the worse on this account. Apart from this, it is not wanting in distinctiveness; the cadence which associates a solo oboe with the voice is as original as it could be, and the use of the trombones at a reference to the baptism of the Holy Ghost ranks among the happiest of the happy thoughts abounding in this oratorio. The story is now taken up by the Narrator, who, in a well-written and picturesque recitative describes the baptism of Christ by His forerunner. Mr. Macfarren does not give the Divine words, "This is my beloved Son," &c., to the solo voice; but, like Mendelssohn in *St. Paul*, to a choir of females. His setting of them is perhaps the most beautiful feature in the entire work, thanks to the ethereal effect produced by the harmonies of the divided violins played in the highest part of their register, and accompanied by sweeping chords for the harp. The voices have only a simple phrase or two, but the rich orchestral setting gives an irresistible charm to the whole. A song for the Narrator, "In the beginning was the Word," is not specially striking or important, and should be re-written. Its comparative failure is, however, amply atoned for by the next chorus, with which the first part of the work ends. Few things in music are more happily conceived or more ably carried out than this number. The words, intended to be a reflection upon what has gone before, are the first verse of Psalm civ., old version, "My soul, praise the Lord," &c., the theme being that of the tune usually associated with them, and known as "Croft's tune," or *Hanover*. Mr. Macfarren first uses the chorale in full, unaccompanied vocal harmony, afterwards taking its first two phrases as the subject of an extremely well-written fugue. With regard to the chorus as a whole, I cannot speak too highly. In contrapuntal skill and majesty of effect it is such music as the greatest composer might be proud to own. The second part of the oratorio opens in Herod's palace with the scene of the Monarch's rebuke by the fearless Prophet. Admirable use has been made of the opportunity for contrast here afforded. The music changes from boldness and emphasis to sensuousness and languor, or *vice versa*, according as John or Herod speaks. The contrast, however, is artfully made to disappear when the king acknowledges the error of his way, and both voices unite in a passage of a chastened religious character. An emphatic prelude in unison again introduces the Narrator, who tells of the supper given by Herod to the chief estates of Galilee. This done, the dramatic form is resumed, and the nobles sing a chorus, "Oh! King! live for ever!" in which they proclaim their master's great-

ness, to the accompaniment of a very full orchestra, including *grosse-caisse*, cymbals and triangle. The chorus is much extended, and crowded with characteristic effects, some of them obviously suggested by the Dervish Chorus in Beethoven's *Ruins of Athens*; it also reproduces two of the themes in the overture with happy significance, and by its general character, as well as by skilful orchestral color, secures a *vraisemblance* which brings the entire scene vividly before the mind's eye. The next number—a chorus for male voices likewise—is sung by the nobles under circumstances which its first words make plain, "Lo, the daughter of Herodias cometh in; she danceth." Mr. Macfarren's skill in avoiding an obvious danger is here conspicuous. The nobles chant the praises of Salome to an accompaniment of dance music and the sound of the tambourine; but the themes are either made up of, or suggested by, fragments of eastern melodies, which, though voluptuous, are far from frivolous. Whatever of "local color" belongs to this number, and much belongs to it, arises chiefly from the admirable use Mr. Macfarren makes of his orchestra. The whole thing is picturesque and suggestive enough to stimulate the duller imagination, and make it conjure up the scene of the banquet as the assembled lords look upon the dancing Salome, and pronounce her "ruddy through the perfection of her beauty." Herod now utters his rash oath, and Salome expresses her joy in a showy bravura air, "I rejoice in my youth." I do not hesitate to pronounce this the weakest number in the work. It goes as far towards commonplace as anything written by Mr. Macfarren can go, and should be cut out in favor of an air more worthy the rest of the oratorio. At its close the nobles speculate among themselves what Salome's request will be, and when that request is made, and Herod has said, "I am exceedingly sorry," they join her in reminding the King of his oath. This episode is well studied and very effective. Salome repeats the pledge of Herod, and the nobles softly echo each phrase, while, whenever the words "the King has said," or "has sworn," are employed, they are repeated over and over again with unmistakable emphasis. Herod then gives vent to his grief in a tenderly expressive air, "Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low." After which, the Narrator tells in recitative, how the King was constrained to keep his word. Again the nobles make themselves heard—this time in a chorus, "Lo! the wrath of the King is as messengers of death"—expressing boisterous approval of Herod's act. This number belongs to a class conspicuous amongst which are "Woe to him" (*Elijah*) and "Stone him to death" (*St. Paul*), and could scarcely attain perfect freedom from reminiscence. Nevertheless it is a very fine and exciting feature in the work—one that sustains the impression of complete mastery made at the very beginning. The scene is now changed to John's prison, and an organ prelude introduces a song of the prisoner. "A man can receive nothing." Suggestive orchestral interludes and a beautiful organ accompaniment give charm to this number, which, nevertheless, is too much extended. We do not see the execution of John, that event being narrated; and with the narration the story ends. There still remain, however, two reflective numbers—a quartet, "Blessed are they which are persecuted," and a chorus, "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see?" The quartet, unaccompanied, is simply beautiful; but the chorus, like the previous song, and, in spite of varied and masterly treatment, needs compression.

The Vocal Registers.

Mr. W. H. DANIELL, in the Worcester *Palladium*, illustrates them by the strings of the violin, as follows:

The violin has four strings of varying size and weight. The lowest or heaviest is called G, the next D, the third A and the smallest and lightest, E. A certain number of the tones can be obtained on all four strings, but let us make use of the three heaviest, G, D, and A. You can play the scale of A, (commencing on the second space of the treble clef,) on each of the three strings, so that the pitch will be the same in each instance; but you will notice that the tone of the G string will be larger and heavier than that of the others, while that of the A string will be the lightest of the three, yet the pitch is precisely the same. But it would be laborious for the performer to use one string alone; besides which, the tapering of the ascending tone is desirable; for which reasons, a part of the notes are commonly made on one string and a part on each of the

others. Now observe the correspondence between these strings and the registers of the voice. The larynx acts in, say, three different ways. In the male voice it is customary to produce three different characters of tone naturally. Every voice does it, and no amount of theorizing can throw this plain fact out of sight. The first, or chest character of tone (I use accepted forms of language merely because they convey the meaning,) is produced by the vibration of the entire larynx; the second, or head voice by the vibrations of about two-thirds the organ; the falsetto voice is the result of the vibration of only one-third. This statement I make as being the result of laryngoscopic investigation, not merely as theory. The chest tone can be produced from the lowest note to upper G, or in other words, the larynx can be made to act throughout its length to enable the voice to reach that note. The head voice can be used from about A, fifth line on bass clef, to A above or even higher, or in other words, the larynx will act during two-thirds its length so as to induce that result. The falsetto voice can run down to A, and very much higher than the octave, owing to the larynx retaining the position necessary during that entire range. But it requires an effort to sing in chest voice above C or D; it requires an effort for the head voice to run lower than E or higher than G, or for the falsetto to run lower than F. Remember that singing should all be done easily, and it must be evident to you that the proper use of the different registers becomes necessary. I am making use of the tenor voice. He sings with the use of the chest register until arrival at about D second space above the bass clef, when a desire for change will assert itself, and if he is wise, he allows the larynx to take the second position, and so continues until arrival at about G or A; when he should under ordinary circumstances allow the next change to take place, and use the falsetto, or light head tone. Many think it hardly worth their while to cultivate this last register, for register it certainly is, but I am disposed to differ with them. With more attention to the proper use of the falsetto, better singing would be heard, and far more enjoyable. I would not, however, defend the habit of "breaking into a falsetto," but would have it cultivated as a legitimate part of the voice. It is historical, not traditional, that the great men of Porpora's training, prided themselves upon their falsetto, and their facility in change of register.

Pupil. Good! I understand it now; but what is meant by the no-register plan? I do not see how it is possible.

Mr. D. It is obviously not possible, but it arose from the desire to have pure singing, with an even character of tone throughout the voice. The movement that started and advocated that theory was a valuable one, and headed by earnest men, striving for the truth; but the theory itself is not only fallacious but mischievous; as for instance: The author of the theory states boldly that registers do not exist in the voice, for which reason, many a person will study with him long enough to get his leading ideas, and then attempt to teach. Finding a pupil whose voice shows change, he makes her resist the change, and so carries up the chest register some notes higher than is safe. The result of so carrying up the chest register is loss of voice; instance Mmes. d'Angri and Gazzaniga, to say nothing of others quite as prominent. It has been claimed by some, that Bellini, Santley, Amodio and others, evidenced the fact of no register; but that was only on account of their exquisite art in uniting them. But the aim is splendid; to do away with variety of tone in the voice, which is positively necessary in a good singer. Let us have at all times purity of tone, with no discoverable changes.

Musical Ramble, 1873.

Within three days of my quitting London, at Munich I heard a splendid band at a morning parade, visited the churches, palaces, the galleries of painting and sculpture, and was present at a very perfect representation of "*Le Prophète*"; band, chorus, *mise en scène*, and principal vocalists a most admirable ensemble—my stall four shillings. On arriving next day at Vienna, heard a very good selection of solo, miscellaneous, and dance music *chez* Strauss. Next day, after rambling through the colossal Exhibition building, I heard a fine Hungarian band of sixty play the overture to "*Oberon*" and other good music. After this, in an elegant building, containing an orchestra of some fifty musicians, I heard solos and miscellaneous classical and dance music, conducted by Strauss—all his music *ad fresco* and gratis. Next day, at the new Grand Theatre, the

most beautifully-decorated theatre in Europe, I heard "*Don Juan*." Some days afterwards I heard "*Lohengrin*" and "*Tannhäuser*," all well given. After the overture of "*Tannhäuser*," magnificently played, the enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds, and Dessoff, the conductor of the band, rose and faced the audience, bowing amidst a torrent of *bravi*. That such operas should be given, appreciated, or satisfactorily sung by Italian or English artists in London is very doubtful. The wretched performances occasionally heard, for want of rehearsals, at our London theatres and concert rooms, give us no hope of Wagner's complex music being performed. Much as I admire the massive effects of the numerous Hungarian, Bohemian, Tyrolean, and Austrian bands, daily heard in the Prado during the Exhibition, I am inclined to award the palm to the Garde République in Paris, under the able direction of M. Paulus. In this band, numerous and well-balanced, there are more refined executants than in any military band I have ever heard since the famed "Cavalry Guides" has been broken up and its players distributed into the Infantry bands. The new Conservatoire in Vienna is nothing less than a palace, partially decorated externally with tasteful devices on a gold ground. The concert room, in the style of Louis Quatorze, seating two thousand, with standing room for a thousand, is the noblest *salon de musique* in Europe. It also contains a new organ of singular contrivance in the adapting of pedals. This noble instrument I heard to great advantage, in company with Antoine Rubinstein. The secretary, Zellner, is not only a skilful writer but a first-rate organist, and played a prelude and allegro of his composition, in *five* parts, with superb effect. The resonance of this palatial salon is perfect. The roof is flat, and two narrow galleries at the sides, and one of greater breadth at the end, accommodate behind the stalls a thousand standing. Two concerts did I hear in this room; one under the direction of E. Strauss, with a fine band and admirable male chorus, the other, the first Philharmonic concert of the season 1873-4, under the direction of Otto Dessoff. In this hasty account of my ramble I cannot do justice to the merits of the Viennese Philharmonic orchestra. The programme included a symphony by Mozart, an overture by Schubert, an unedited theme of Haydn, with variations for orchestra by Brahms, the *Danse des Sylphs* by Berlioz (encored), and Beethoven's symphony in A major. Such delicacy, vigor, scrupulous observance of nuances, unity of style! Except at the Conservatoire concert in Paris I never heard any performance so perfect, so effective. As I remarked in my book of sketches, 1866, there is a custom at Vienna concerts that redounds greatly to the intelligence and good taste of the appreciative auditory. After a fine execution of a great work, like the symphony of Beethoven, comes an universal burst of applause—homage to the composer; a second round of applause is responded to by the conductor; and after a third round of applause the members of the orchestra rise and bow to the public. This short instrumental concert gave me more pleasure than I can well express. The secret of this excellence, unattainable in London, is attributable to education producing unity of style. For this entertainment of one hour and a half's music there had been *four* rehearsals! On All Saints' day I deposited, for the fourth time, a wreath on the tombs of Beethoven and Schubert, after hearing at the Imperial Chapel Liszt's grand Mass, admirably sung and performed. On my way home, at Paris, I heard the National Society of young artists perform Beethoven's symphony in A most admirably; the band consisting of some seventy-six musicians. This concert took place in the Theatre of Châtelet. Hearing within eight days the same symphony in a theatre and concert-room, I felt convinced of the superiority of the latter. The curved roofs of London halls and rooms is a great mistake. The best room in London, of proper proportions and form to give effect to music, is that in Hanover Square. J. ELLA.

—London Orchestra Nov. 14.

Cherubini.

Italian opera reached its zenith with the writings of Cherubini. In his operas the melody of the Italian school was united with the symphonic instrumentation and grand effects of the German composers. Beethoven often expressed the highest opinions of Cherubini, and when his opera "*Faniska*" was brought out at Vienna, in 1805, both Haydn and Beethoven considered its author the first dramatic composer of the period. Cherubini was equally successful in his setting of the tragic and comic

THE WANDERER.

F. Schubert.

Largo.

pp *Cres.*

From countries far a-way I come,
 Ich kom-me vom Ge-bir-ge her,

fz *Dim.* *p* *pp*

Where'er I go,
 es dampft das Thal,

Where'er I
 es braust das

go,
 Meer, I find no home.
 es braust das Meer.

Cres. *f* *sp* *pp*

THE WANDERER, Continued.

I wan - der on, de - void of peace,
Ich wand - le still, bin ee - - nig froh,

pp

Marcato.

My joys di - min - - ish, woes..... in - crease, woes..... in -
Und im - - mer fragt der Seuf - - zer wo? in - - mer

p

ppp

- crease. The sun's warm rays to me feel cold, My life's young days seem grow - ing old; The
wo? Die Son - - ne dünkt mich hier so kalt, die Blü - the welk, das Le - ben alt, und

pp

bloom - ing flow - ers dead.... and sere, I feel a stran - ger ev' - ry - where.
was sie re - den lee - - rer Schall; ich bin ein Fremd - ling ü - - ber - all.

Cres.

pp

THE WANDERER, Continued.

Pia vivo.

Where art thou? where art thou? my be-lov-ed home. I turn..... to
 Wo bist du, wo bist du, mein ge-lieb-tes Land! ge-sucht,..... ge

mf

Viva.

thee,..... where - - e'er..... I roam, It
 ahnt,..... und nie..... ge - - kannst. Das

p pp fp

makes my ve-ry heart ex-pand, my heart ex-pand, To think of thee, my
 Land, das Land so hoff-nungs-grün, so hoff-nungs-grün, das Land, wo mei-ne

f p

na-tive land, Thy cliffs so white, thy hills so blue, Where blooms the rose and li-ly too, And
 Ro-sen blüh'n, wo mei-ne Freun-de wan-deln geh'n, wo mei-ne Tod-ten auf-ersteh'n, das

THE WANDERER, Concluded.

Tempo primo.

ear - ly friends with hearts so true, Oh! land.... where art thou?
Land, das mei - ne Spra - che spricht, o Land.... wo bist du?

A spir - it's warn - - ing voice I hear, It whis - - pers
Ich wand' - le still, bin we - - nig froh. Und im - - mer

soft - - ly in..... my ear, in..... my ear, Soon shalt thou quit life's
fragt der Seuf - - zer wo? im - - mer wo? Im Geis - ter - hauch tont's

troubled wave, And find thy home in the si - lent grave.
mir zu - rück: Dort wo du nicht bist, dort ist das Glück.

fp
Colla voce.

themes. His "Medea," in grandeur of conception and dignity of treatment, is perhaps only excelled by Beethoven's "Fidelio," while his "Les deux Journées" approaches more nearly than do the writings of any other composer, the perfection of Mozart's comic operas. Cherubini's labors were not limited to the operatic stage, but extended through nearly the whole field of sacred and secular music. He wrote upwards of thirty operas, of which "Anacreon," "Iphigenia in Aulida," "Faniska," "Medea," and "Les deux Journées" were the most successful, and despite the growing ascendancy of the German school and the popularity of Donizetti and Verdi, some of Cherubini's operas still hold the stage. A few years ago "Medea" was revived at "Her Majesty's Theatre," London, with Mlle. Tietjens in the title role. The revival was a very great success, and Tietjens's personation of *Medea* is generally thought to be as grand as her *Leonora* ("Fidelio"), a character of which she is the most satisfactory representative that has appeared since the death of Malibran. *Medea* is a very exacting part both vocally and histrionically, much of its effect lying in the forcible declamation of recitative. On the occasion of its revival the other characters were sustained by Dr. Gunz, Jason, and Miss Laura Harris, Dirce. This lady, who is said to have been an American, possessed a voice of the Carlotta Patti order, and was therefore able to reach the exceptionally high notes which Cherubini allotted to her music. "Les deux Journées" was one of the quasi-novelties promised in London last season, but the managerial pledge was not redeemed. It is very popular in Paris, and is announced for representation there, this winter.

Cherubini was born at Florence in the year 1760. As in the case of the majority of great composers, his talents were not long in developing, and when scarcely more than a child, he composed several pieces and a mass. His first musical instruction was derived from the Felices, but he owed the correctness of his style and his skill in counterpoint mainly to the subsequent instructions of Sarti, who was then one of the most deservedly popular composers of opera. In 1784 Cherubini was invited to London, where he superintended the production of two of his operas, "La Finta Principessa," and "Giulio Sabini." After a brief stay in London, Cherubini removed to Paris, where he lived unharnessed through all the terrible scenes of the Revolution. The year 1800 witnessed the first representation of "Les deux Journées," which created a perfect *furor*. On the death of Paer, Cherubini was appointed director of the *Conservatoire*. There it was his good fortune to number among his pupils several promising musicians, whose names have since become celebrated. Of these Auber, afterwards his successor in the *Conservatoire*, Boieldieu and Halevy are brilliant examples. Although Cherubini lived till the age of eighty-three, he continued to write up to within a very brief period before his decease, which occurred at Paris, in 1843.

MENDELSSOHN'S LAST BIRTHDAY is thus recorded in the diary of Moscheles. The charade on the word "Gewandhaus" will be intelligible to English readers when it is understood that the syllable "Ge" (pronounced *gā*) is German for the musical note G; "Wand" is German for wall, and "Haus" of course means house.

"The proceedings were opened with a capital comic scene between two lady's maids, acted in the Franklin dialect, by Cécile and her sister. Then came a charade on the word 'Gewandhaus.' Joachim, adorned with a fantastic wig, à la Paganini, played a hare-brained impromptu on the G string; the syllable 'Wand' was represented by the Pyramus and Thisbe wall-scene from the 'Midsummer Night's Dream'; for 'Haus,' Charlotte acted a scene she had written herself, in which she is discovered knitting a blue stocking, and soliloquizing on the foibles of female authoresses, advising them to attend to their domestic duties. By way of enforcing the moral, she calls her cook—the cook was I myself, and my appearance in cap and dress was the signal for a general uproar. Mendelssohn was sitting on a large straw arm-chair which creaked under his weight, as he rocked to and fro, and the room echoed with his peals of laughter. The whole word 'Gewandhaus' was illustrated by a full orchestra, Mendelssohn and my children playing on little drums and trumpets; Joachim leading with a toy violin my Felix conducting à la Julien. It was splendid." Such was Mendelssohn's last birthday.

Music Abroad.

London.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.—Mr. S. Arthur Chapell has issued the prospectus of the sixteenth season. Sixteen morning performances will be given on Saturdays, and sixteen on Monday evening. Mr. Charles Hallé and Dr. Hans von Bülow will be the pianists. Mme. Norman Néruda and M. Sainton the violinists, before Christmas. Signor Piatti will hold the post of first violoncello on all occasions; Herr L. Ries that of second violin; Herr Straus or Mr. Zerbini will play viola; Sir Julius Benedict and Mr. Zerbini, as heretofore, officiating as conductors. Mr. Sims Reeves is engaged for one evening, add Mr. Santley for one evening and two mornings. The "Schwedische Damen-Quartet" will make their appearance in December. Mme. Schumann, Miss Agnes Zimmermann, Herr Pauer, Herr Danreuther, Mr. Franklin Taylor, and Herr Joachim, will appear after Christmas.

CARL ROSA'S ENGLISH OPERA TROUPE. In the London *Advertiser*, Nov. 4, we read:

At last there is a chance of English opera being established upon a permanent basis, and of the slur that has hitherto tarnished our national repute in music being removed. Practical and experienced hands have taken the matter up, capital is not wanting to support the necessary preliminary outlay, and already good results have been achieved. Mr. Carl Rosa, who with his wife Mme. Parepa-Rosa has been concerned in the direction of many similar undertakings in America, has formed a company, and for the last two months has given performances of English opera in several of the principal provincial towns. His plan is one that deserves the attention of all true lovers of art progress. Mr. Rosa proposes to approach the metropolis by degrees, to drill his forces deliberately and thoroughly, and ultimately to bring before the London public representations of English opera upon a scale of completeness that shall challenge comparison with others on the lyric stage. The Carl Rosa company numbers upwards of seventy individuals. The repertoire includes *Marianna*, *The Bohemian Girl*, *The Rose of Castile*, *Satanella*, *May Queen*, and English versions of many of the most popular foreign operas. Among the principal artists are found Miss Blanche Cole and Miss Rose Hersee, with whose brilliant talents our readers are well acquainted; Mr. William Castle and Mr. Chatterton, two very first-rate tenors, both, we believe, originally associated with Mr. Carl Rosa in America. Mr. Castle is an accomplished artist in every respect. Gifted with an admirable voice and handsome personal appearance, he represents the different tenor roles with great effect. Mr. Chatterton, apparently quite a youth, although by no means an inexperienced actor, vocalizes with remarkable ease, and fills the position of *tenore leggero* in the company. Miss Catherine Lewis and Miss Lucy Franklin, the mezzo sopranos or contraltos, are most praiseworthy, and give immense promise of future excellence; Mr. Aynsley Cook and Mr. S. C. Campbell are among the baritones and basses—the latter a conscientious singer who has acquired reputation in the United States. The band and chorus engaged by Mr. Carl Rosa are excellent; the costumes with which he furnishes his company are fresh, and in many instances costly; while nothing is wanting, not even to the minutest detail, to give effect to every opera produced under his direction. The first London season of the enterprise will, we believe, commence in March next at Drury Lane Theatre. It will be of short duration. As the earnest originator of a new order of things in the cause of English opera, Mr. Carl Rosa assuredly deserves success.

The company this week appears at Brighton, having been engaged by Mr. Kuhe for a series of opera recitals in the Dome Concert Room.

BRISTOL MUSICAL FESTIVAL. New rivals to the time-honored English Festivals (Birmingham, Gloucester, &c.) have come into the field during the past season. Of one of them the *Musical Standard*, of Oct. 21, says:

In musical matters Bristol has hitherto chiefly been known as possessing an excellent Madrigal Society, doubtless the most finished body of part-singers that has ever been heard in this country. Founded some thirty-five years ago, the society has numbered among its mem-

bers several well-known musicians. Pearsall was one of these, and he has from time to time presented the society with copies of his works, many of which remain yet unpublished. Having such an excellent choir to serve as a nucleus, the Bristol people conceived the idea of holding a musical festival in their city, the proceeds of which should be appropriated to local charities. Judging from the published list of patrons, the committee have done their utmost to command success, although they are but mortals; and they undoubtedly deserve it. In the first place, nearly two hundred vice-presidents, all of whom are either peers, noblemen, baronets, or members of Parliament, have been secured, with the Duke of Beaufort as President of the Meeting. And if we turn to the guarantors, we find here 220 names,—pretty strong evidence of the determination of the committee to net a handsome sum in any case for the Bristol Charities, even should the festival prove financially a failure. They have spared no expense in any one department or detail. The list of principal vocalists comprises the first oratorio singers of the day; for the orchestra Charles Hallé's band, augmented to eighty performers, has been engaged; while for chorus, a local choir of 200 voices has been in active training for months past, and has accordingly reached a high state of proficiency.

Amongst the principal vocalists we find: Mme. Sherrington and Mme. Otto-Alvsleben, Mme. Patey, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Mr. Santley, and in addition to these, are: Miss Julia Wigan, Miss Enriquez and Messrs. Vernon Rigby, Lloyd, and Lewis Thomas. It is worth noting that all these singers, with one exception, are English; and well may we be proud of them. As it is her first appearance at a provincial festival in this country, some account of Mme. Alvsleben's antecedents may be interesting. This lady holds a very high rank as a singer in Germany, where she first won her laurels as prima donna at the Dresden Opera-house. At the Beethoven Centenary Festival, at Bonn, in August, 1871, she was engaged as principal soprano, and her excellent singing on this occasion attracted much notice. The fact of Mr. Charles Hallé having been the solo pianist at this same Bonn Festival will account for Mme. Alvsleben's first appearance in England at that gentleman's Manchester Concerts; this was in the "Creation," in March last. She made her debut at the Crystal Palace in the same month, and afterwards sang at the Royal Albert Hall, and in Bach's *Passions-Musik*, at the Oratorio Concerts. Her performances on all these occasions elicited the warmest praise from the musical critics. And there can be little doubt that Mlle. Alvsleben's singing in the "Creation" to-day, little though she had to do, has already established her as a favorite in this city. The oratorio was given without any omission, which is so seldom done, but why, it is difficult to say; for it cannot be called heavy, and it has by no means lost its hold on the popular ear. In the first and second parts Mme. Sherrington sang the soprano music, and Mr. Santley sustained the bass solos; while in the third part Mme. Alvsleben, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Lewis Thomas appeared. Mr. Sims Reeves sang only in the second part of the oratorio, delivering the air, "In Native Worth," with his usual effect. The performance of the whole work was very fine. The National Anthem was given previously, Mme. Sherrington and Mr. Lloyd singing the solo verses.

Wednesday, Oct. 22nd.

The most noteworthy features at last evening's concert were, undoubtedly the playing of the band and the singing of the Festival choir. The overture to "Euryanthe" was given by Mr. Hallé's band, well known to be as fine a body of players, as a whole, as any in England, and it needs not to say with what effect. The policy of engaging the entire band is so manifestly a good one, that it will probably be now adopted at other festivals. In the C minor symphony the points worth notice were the trio, unfortunately taken so fast as to become an inarticulate scramble, and the wonderful crescendo upon the long-sustained C of the drums leading into the finale, which, under Mr. Hallé's baton, was worked up with grand effect. The "Guillaume Tell" overture, and the Priests' War March from "Athalia" were the other instrumental numbers. An announcement from the vice-chairman of the committee that Mr. Sims Reeves was too unwell to appear was met with the usual murmurings and hisses from the back of the Hall. However no one seemed to be surprised, and Mr. Lloyd filled the vacancy by singing Blumenthal's "Message." "Che f r d," from Guck's "Orfeo," a lovely air, abounding in delicious bits of melody, was sung by Mme. Patey. Mme. Sherrington and Mr. Santley both selected solos from "Dinorah"—the former sang her celebrated "Shadow-song," and the celebrated canon from "Fidelio" was capitally given by Mmes. Sherrington and Alvsleben and Messrs. Rigby and Santley. Mr. Hallé's solos were of the lighter kind, as better adapted for a mixed audience. Schubert's well-known impromptu in A-flat, and the Tarantelle in E mi-

nor of Heller. The singing of the choir in two of Mendelssohn's part-songs was worthy of all praise.

Elijah formed the programme of Wednesday morning, the solos being sung by Mmes. Alvsleben, Sherrington, Patey and Miss Julia Wigan, Mr. Vernon Rigby, Mr. Lloyd (in place of Reeves), and Mr. Santley.

On Thursday, Mr. Macfarren's new Oratorio "St. John the Baptist" was produced with great success. We copy a description of the work upon another page. Of its composer, Mr. Davison in the *Times* writes:

The composer of "John the Baptist" is held in the highest possible esteem by his fellow-musicians in this country, not a few among whom, now eminent, have been his pupils. Cipriani Potter, his instructor at the Royal Academy of Music, being dead, Mr. Macfarren, both by age and experience, is entitled to be regarded as the "doyen" of English composers. During a long professional career he has set an example of industrious application well worth imitating. He is not only our most learned theorist, but he has tried his powers in almost every accepted form of musical composition, vocal and instrumental. His operas and cantatas are, for the greater part, known to all who care about making themselves acquainted with what is really genuine in music. His orchestral symphonies, concert-overtures, quartets, and trios, his pianoforte sonatas, &c., and last, not least, his glees, vocal duets, and songs, which, if collected, would, perhaps, secure for him the foremost claim to be denominated our "English Schubert," are less generally familiar; but a time can hardly fail to arrive when they also—the songs, married to verses by some of the greatest English and German poets, especially—will obtain the recognition which is no less than their just due. Those who enjoyed the privilege of Mendelssohn's acquaintance must remember how warmly that illustrious master appreciated the compositions of Mr. Macfarren, the pains he bestowed on the production of some of them at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Concerts, and the cordiality which marked the correspondence between the two musicians. Though, as already hinted, Mr. Macfarren has shown his efficiency in so many and various branches of his art, he never—at least, to our knowledge—submitted to the final and most important test of all. At length, however, he appeals to us with a sacred oratorio. How many such essays have been made, and how few have survived (or had any chance of surviving) the brief hour of their temporary vogue, need hardly be said. Probably one out of one hundred would be not an unfair estimate. A single hearing of "John the Baptist" inclines us to the belief that this new oratorio may prove one of the few exceptions to the rule.

From the same source we learn that "the performance was in all respects excellent. More efficient interpreters of the four acts who figure in the oratorio—St. John the Baptist [Mr. Santley]; Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee [Mr. Edward Lloyd]; Salome, daughter of Herodias [Mme. Lemmens-Sherrington]; and the "Narrator" [Mme. Patey]—could not possibly have been found. The composer was, indeed, happy in his chief exponents. Mr. Hallé deserves high commendation for the pains he must have taken in preparing this new and elaborate composition for public performance. Though German by birth, Mr. Hallé, by his very long residence among us, and the influence he has legitimately exercised upon music in England, has almost become a naturalized Englishman himself, and in his adopted country must naturally take an interest in whatever helps the progress of that art of which he himself is so eminent a representative.

The *Messiah*—a matter of course in England—brought the Festival to a close.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, DEC. 13, 1873.

A Week of the Thomas Orchestra.

It is a pleasure, and a very rare one, to be able to speak of any good thing with unqualified praise. This it is always safe enough to do of the performance of the very perfect orchestra which Mr. THOMAS has held bound together, winter and summer, now for half a dozen years, with occasional changes in the membership of course, but always preserving the collective identity, the unity of character and spirit in the whole. This orchestra was

never better than it is now,—perhaps never quite so good, though that were hard to say. The number of instruments is about the same as in past seasons,—not "sixty," as has been so often represented, not in fact quite so large as in our Symphony orchestra, unless we count in all the "Janissary" instruments that help occasionally to increase the noise of some sensational new work. The true measure of an orchestra is of course the strings; the number of wind instruments is essentially the same for all complete orchestras (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tympani, = 18). Now the two bodies compare as follows:

1st Violins.....	Harvard 9.....	Thomas 8
2nd ".....	" 8.....	" 8
Violas.....	" 6.....	" 5
Violoncellos.....	" 6.....	" 4
Double Basses.....	" 6.....	" 4
	35	29

To the 19 reeds, brass, percussion, &c., of our orchestra, Thomas adds a harp, a piccolo, a Corno Anglaise, a bass clarinet, a third trumpet, a tuba, and divers military drums, which, if each implied an extra man, would make the two orchestras just about equal in respect of numbers; while as to balance of parts, the proportion of strings to wood and brass is larger, and in so far better, with us. At the same time it must be admitted that there is more real musical effectiveness, perhaps more rich and full sonority in the Thomas orchestra (we mean without the extras, for the compositions which require these furnish an abnormal standard), even with its smaller numbers.

The Thomas orchestra has all the conditions for realizing an orchestral ideal; the chief of which is that these musicians play together the whole year round, never absent one day from each other, never omitting the day's punctual rehearsal; the habit and tradition of their co-working and co-feeling never broken off and lost by all sorts of distracting musical drudgery in bands, theatres and balls, or other concert combinations; nothing whatever to impair the artistic morale of the organization. With this means of offering permanent engagements to musicians, the able conductor can do, even in this free country, what is done in the *Kapellen* of the wealthy courts of the old world,—induce the best artists to take their part with him, renouncing all other occupation. Thus we have an orchestra in the true sense, and there is no other in America. Each large and cultivated city ought to have one; each of our cities ought and could, if its musical taste were genuine and steadfast, not forever running after fashions, novelties, sensations, furnish employment enough for a fine orchestra, to induce musicians enough to make that their principal, if not their only business, so that we need not be dependent upon any but our own resources for the most satisfactory performances of great instrumental music. Of the remarkable gift for leadership of Mr. Thomas it is not necessary to speak. And in addition to these advantages, there is that of very shrewd, experienced business management, and now the prestige of success at every point and admiration echoed through the land.

The first charm of this orchestra, we think,—that which first "hits the sense," and penetrates and quickens the attention, is the rare purity and vitality of the intonation; it makes it all sound wonderfully alive. Then, besides the good tone quality and color of each instrument, there is the mutual subordination and sympathetic blending of them all. And then the careful, admirable phrasing, felt in every instrument as in a refined, artistic singer. And the gradations of light and shade are subtle and perpetual, so that the sense is not wearied by any unrelieved dead weight of sound.

Such is the orchestra in itself, and such the manner in which it does its work. Such and so perfect are the means which Mr. Thomas has at his disposal. That all the matter which he has presented in his six long programmes—each lasting over two hours and a half—was worthy of such means, there is at least room for doubt; nor could we always feel in the interpretation, as such, of classical masterworks,—apart from the purely sensuous charm always exerted by the sound of such an orchestra, and from the sense of things all going on so smoothly, that there was any especial fineness or vigor of conception, any infusing of a new life and soul into the work, or any fresh inspiration added out of the soul and individuality of the interpreter.

The programmes, although still partaking of the rather medley character, and mixing of incongruous styles and moods, which they have shown before, were on the whole somewhat better; there was a larger proportion of the classical good works, and if not a smaller allowance of questionable novelties, of things, extravagant, grotesque, sensational, yet a total exclusion of Strauss Waltzes and of the Symphonic Poem monstrosities of Liszt. But each programme seemed to lack interval unity of motive. Schubert's D minor variations shivered in a strange element between Svendsen and Berlioz; "I will extol thee, O my God" sounded strangely after the madcap minuet and ballet of "La Damnation de Faust;" the ballad of "Three Fishers" and the blazing pomp of *Lohengrin* were not what one would ask for after the great Scena from *Fidelio*, preceded by the great Schubert Symphony; and so on. Here is variety enough, richness enough perhaps, but we must deny that it shows particularly good taste in programme making; too many startling, and sometimes tedious, elements seem to intrude themselves into the wrong company.

We have not room to give the several programmes in detail, but may classify the materials of the six under several heads. Four of the concerts (Saturday, Nov. 28, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Dec. 1, 3 and 5) opened with a Symphony. The "Jupiter" of Mozart—the great one in C, that of the fugued Finale with four subjects—was of course finely executed; but the *Andante Cantabile* movement (played also by itself the evening before) was taken at so very slow a tempo as to make it dull; and strangely slow again the *Minuetto*. Beethoven's fresh, sunshiny No. 8 seemed precisely suited to this orchestra; the admirably true intonation of the instruments made its atmosphere uncommonly exhilarating, and all the delicious harmonies, the winning phrases were as distinct and palpable as possible; only the rapidity of the last Allegro seemed unprecedented and excessive. Schubert's great Symphony in C, that of the "heavenly length," never seemed to us so short. Many a good performance it has had here during a dozen years and more, and many a large audience has deeply felt its power; but never have we heard it rendered quite so perfectly as this time; one listened with entire absorption and with unalloyed enjoyment. The fourth Symphony was one of the "programme" order and entirely new here. It was the No. 5 by Raff, whose Symphony in C, and Suite of equally formidable magnitude were given in the Harvard concerts a few years since. It bears the title "Leonore," and is intended to illustrate Bürger's ghastly German ballad. It is in three divisions. The first entitled "*Liebesglück*" (the bliss of love) consists of two movements: an *Allegro*, and an *Andante quasi Larghetto*, the first of which seemed to us as vague, restless and unblissful as it was high-strung and screaming in its color, the second intolerably prolix. The second division, "*Trennung*" (parting) has a spirited and piquant march, and depicts very

vividly the parting with the soldier lover going to the war. All this is introductory. The Ballad proper is recited in the third part: "Reunion in Death," where the heavy tramp of the fearful ride with the skeleton bridegroom through interminable graveyards, amid shrill shrieks and gibberish of ghosts and demons, a "tramp, tramp" fatal, unremitting, is kept up in a very graphic manner, but at fearful length. Is it not ingenious melodrama, rather than true Symphony? Evidently the work found not a few admirers in the audience, and rhapsodical descriptions in the next day's newspapers. We have even found one or two in private since, whose tastes are commonly in sympathy with ours, who spoke of it with enthusiasm. Our honest first impression may be very stupid; much we know depends on moods; we shall be very happy to acknowledge it, if in future hearings we should find more music in it.

With the classical Symphonies, we should have mentioned several of the good old Overtures (Beethoven's "Weihe des Hauses," "Leonore, No. 2 (unusual)," and "Fidelio;" Rossini's "Tell" and Weber's "Preciosa")—all of which were rendered to a charm. Also arrangements for orchestra with all the strings of Variations from Schubert's Quartet in D minor, and of the Theme and Variations, Scherzo and Finale from Beethoven's Septet, which was given in two concerts. Both of these are always welcome and were beautifully played. In the latter the transfer of half the second violins (which have no part in the Septet) to the first violins, while the rest were added to the violas, made those parts particularly rich and full, telling with grand effect in the perfect unison of that fine cadenza. The other classical selections were solos, of which in their turn.

Of new-school orchestral compositions there were, besides Raff's "Leonore," in the first place the "Rhapsodie Hongroise," No. 2, by Liszt, a wonderfully brilliant, startling and ingenious transcription from the piano-forte, which was given twice; doubtless the intoxicating, well-spiced bowl ministered to a keen sensuous delight. Then there was a Symphonic Introduction to "Segard Slembe," by the Norwegian composer, Svendsen, which to our ear was "sound and fury signifying nothing," and a pretty enough but rather common Scherzo by the same. Berlioz figured in his "Queen Mab" Scherzo; the Evocation, Menuet des Follets and Ballet des Sylphes, from "La Damnation de Faust;" and the Overture: "Carneval Romaine." The Sylphs were indeed exquisitely graceful, and their dance won a hearty encore. The rest seems to us, for the most part, like mere curious experiments in tone-colors, with little or no development of any vital germs of musical idea, but full of pretty tricks and contrasts of effect; amusing, but not edifying; the charm ephemeral; the art too fine for the theme.—Of Wagner—whose music, we admit, is never fairly to be judged apart from the stage—there were played: first, the unpublished *Bacchanale* which Wagner substituted for the latter portion of the Overture to *Tannhäuser*, when the opera was given in Paris; it is in the Venus-Berg vein, and carries the tumult and intoxication of the senses to a giddy height than ever. This was followed by the loud pomp of the *Huldigungs-Marsch*. From the *Lohengrin* were given the Introduction or *Vorspiel*, the brilliant Introduction, Bridal Chorus and March from the 3d Act, which have always proved the most effective of these orchestral reproductions; and another set of selections, from the 1st Act, which leave a most confused impression. We were allowed to taste again the Introduction and Finale to "Tristan and Isolde," but we suppose our taste is still too simple for such game. "Trois Danses

Allemandes," by Bargiel, we did not hear. More interesting, because more natural, poetic and sincere in their expression, than most of the new works we have lately heard, were first: the "Nordische Suite," op. 22, by another of the Northern sea-shore *Tondichter*, Asger Hamerick, consisting of five characteristic little pieces: 1. In the woods. 2. Old Swedish ballad. 3. Norse Fling. 4. Menuet (rather funeral). 5. Bridal March; secondly, Introduction to the opera, "The Seven Ravens," by Rheinberger.

The concerts were diversified by solos, vocal and instrumental. Among the latter the most interesting was the performance by Mr. LISTEMANN of the first movement of Joachim's Hungarian Concerto, one of the most difficult of all pieces for the violin, but full of beauty and of fire. Ever since he played it in a Harvard Concert several years ago we have wished to hear it again; nor were we disappointed either in the work itself, or in the admirable rendering. The same artist won immense applause in the Fantasia on Slavonic airs by Vieuxtemps. Spohr's Concerto for two violins was very finely played by Messrs. ARNOLD and JACOBSON; and the latter gentleman gave pleasure by a group of shorter solos (Berceuse, by Spohr; Valse, by Chopin; Præludium, by Bach). The new violoncellist, Mr. LOUIS LUBBECK, has a good deal of execution, but not a very large, rich tone, nor is his intonation always pure. He played a Concerto by Molique and a Fantasia by Servais, neither of them particularly interesting except as tests of virtuosity. Weber's Clarinet Concerto, by Mr. KAYSER, we did not hear; but Mr. LOCKWOOD's harp performances were masterly and realized the full charm of the poetic instrument, of late too much neglected.—What we have noted of the singing is crowded out till next time.

SYMPHONY CONCERTS.—The third of the Harvard series (Dec. 4) was the best yet of the season, one of the most delightful concerts ever given in the Music Hall. We shall be borne out in the statement by the whole body of appreciative listeners,—pity only that there were not more, but the weather was of the most forbidding. This was the unique, varied and harmonious programme:

Overture to "The Magic Flute".....Mozart.
**Passacaglia, in C minor. Organ work, arranged for Orchestra by H. Esser.....Bach.
*Tenor Airs, from music to Milton's "L'Allegro".....Handel.

a { No. 1. Recit.: "Hence, loathed Melancholy."
7. Air: "Come and trip it."
b { 22. Recit.: "Mirth, admit me of thy crew."
23. Sicilian: "Let me wander, not unseen."
c { 36. Air: "I'll to the well-trod stage anon."
George L. O-good.

Selections from music to Byron's "Manfred".....Schumann.
a. Incantation of the Witch of the Alps.
b. Entr'acte.

Symphony, in B flat (No. 8 in Breitk. and Härtel ed.).....Haydn.
Adagio, Allegro.—Adagio Cantabile.—Minuet.—Presto.

a. "Stille Sicherheit," Op. 10, No. 2.....Franz.
b. "Love's Message," (Schwanengesang, No. 1.).....Schubert.
"Murmuring brooklet, so silvery bright,
Hie to my darling with eager delight," etc.
c. "Nähe des Geliebten," Op. 5, No. 2.....Schubert.
Overture to "Euryanthe".....Weber.

The two Overtures were finely played and made a noble opening and a brilliant finale to the feast. And the bright, strong, healthy Symphony by Haydn was heard throughout with lively interest. The exquisite little pieces from "Manfred" were most delicately rendered, and a repetition had to be granted. The orchestral transcription of Bach's grand, deep, thoughtful Passacaglia took possession of the mind at once and held it in a mood which one reluctantly exchanged for any other. It is a musing, deep soliloquy, tranquil and religious, and brings rest to the weary spirit. The variations on the theme that hums itself through in the deep

basses are made more clear in outline, the movement of the parts more individualized, and the enriched and varied with contrasts of color by the instruments as compared with the Organ, and so the work was more appreciated by the many. In this, as in all their numbers, the Orchestra surpassed itself, and proved that it is possible to have a good orchestra of our own in Boston; good support is the main thing needed; and for this there must be several times "ten concerts" in the year.

Mr. Osgood's singing of the two fresh, charming groups of songs was the theme of universal praise. New and refreshing to most hearers were the little pieces from "L'Allegro," although to some no doubt the style of Handel appeared tame and behind the fashion of the times. We hope these will some day have an opportunity to renew acquaintance with these pieces when the entire work may lend them its own atmosphere, for truly they are beautiful and genial. The opening recitative is grand; the Minuet, "Come and trip it," quiet but lifesome, full of grace; the Siciliano a most lovely melody; and the song in which Jonson and Shakspeare figure, most spirited and striking, though the theme be odd. Mr. O. has gained very much in volume, sweetness, evenness of voice, and his interpretation both of these and of the *Lieder* was most true, refined and satisfactory.

The fourth concert has to come on Friday (Dec. 19) instead of the usual Thursday, on account of a Fair held in the hall. Schubert's *Fierabras* Overture, and the great Beethoven E-flat Concerto, played by Mme. MADELINE SCHILLER (her first appearance in Boston) will form the first part. Part II. will open with Bennett's lovely "Wood Nymph" Overture, followed by Mme. Schiller with Liszt's "Midsummer Night's Dream" transcription, and close with Schumann's great first Symphony, which made such an impression in the second concert.

Italian Opera in New York.

NEW YORK, DEC. 8.—The season of Opera which came to an end on Saturday last, was undoubtedly the best we ever had in our city. The fact that it was not successful financially as well as artistically is to be regretted; but this arose from causes which no one could foresee. Mr. Strakosch is to return to us ere long, and it is to be hoped that he will then reap the benefit of his liberal policy which has spared no pains to redeem the promises made in his prospectus. Not only has he produced the well worn and favorite works, which the operatic public insist upon hearing every season, and performed them in a style which (always excepting the chorus) would be no discredit to the rue Lepelletier, but more than that, he has brought out several works which are novelties to us, and one opera in advance of its performance at London and Paris.

His company is an unusually strong one, and, having secured first-class artists for his leading roles, he has not fallen into the error too common among managers, of selecting incompetent singers for the subordinate parts. Mme. Nilsson, who has taken most of the leading soprano roles, is now universally acknowledged to be unsurpassed by any artist upon the lyric stage. Such a combination of the highest talents, both vocal and histrionic, as she exhibits has not been since the days of Malibran.

Of Mme. Nilsson therefore it is needless here to speak, save to say that she has been in good voice throughout the season, and that every part she has undertaken has received the best possible interpretation. Among her impersonations have been those of Violetta, in *La Traviata*; Mignon, in the opera of that name; Marguerite in *Faust*; Leonora in *Il Trovatore*; Valentine in the *Huguenots*; Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and Lucia in *Lucia*. Miss Cary has appeared before us so often in company with Nilsson that her name seems in some way connected with that of the great soprano. This lady is always at her best, and her full, rich contralto voice, and her easy, natural acting have justly made her a favorite with the public.

The second Soprano, Mlle. Torriani, is a new artist, who comes to us from London with the laurels of Drury Lane fresh upon her. She made a good impression here as Elvira in *Ernani*, and in the other roles in which she appeared she is favorably spoken of.

Mlle. Marisi comes third on the list of sopranos. Her voice is remarkably pure, and her singing brilliant and artistic; in her acting, however, she fails, showing a degree of self-consciousness which is, at times, absolutely painful to the beholder. Of tenors there are two, Campanini and Capoul. The latter is already well and favorably known here, so I will not seek his merits to disclose nor draw his falsetto from its dread abode. Of the other tenor I have two distinct impressions: one of his singing, which in the main is remarkably good, and the other of his acting, which is unmistakably bad.

Maurel is the best baritone we have heard since the visit to this country of Santley. Signors Del Puente and Nanetti, if not remarkable singers, are useful members of the troupe, and have taken with credit such parts as have fallen to them.

In the appointments and setting of the stage there has been a manifest improvement over past seasons, and the orchestra under the baton of Sig. Muzio is the best which has ever been heard in connection with opera in New York. Even in the chorus there has been an improvement with each successive representation, and there is little doubt that, were Mr. Strakosch permanently established here, he would soon do away with the only fault we have to find, namely the inefficiency of this part of his troupe.

Hard times would have furnished the manager a good excuse for deferring indefinitely a project involving so great an outlay as the production of *Aida*, but to his credit he has kept faith with the public and brought out that opera with a magnificence which I have never seen equalled upon any stage.

Your readers will not need a detailed account of this opera here, as so many descriptions of it have already been published, but a brief outline of the plot will not be out of place.

Aida was written for the Khedive of Egypt, and was first performed in Cairo, Dec. 24, 1871. It has since been performed at Milan, but it is yet unheard in Paris and London. The plot is laid at Memphis and Thebes "during the time of the Pharaohs." *Aida*, the daughter of Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, is a slave in the palace of Pharaoh at Memphis. She wins the heart of Radames, a young Egyptian general, who, at the opening of the opera leads a campaign against the Ethiopians, from which he returns in triumph bringing Amonasro a prisoner, and begs the lives of his captives from the King, who offers him in reward for his services the hand of his daughter Amneris. Radames however declines this honor, and, in an interview with *Aida*, is persuaded by her to reveal the secret of a pass which his troops have left unguarded. Their conversation is overheard by Ramfis a high priest, and by Amneris, who, with the fury of a woman scorned, denounces Radames as a traitor. He is condemned to be buried alive in the vaults under the great temple of the god Phthah. Pardon is offered him if he will accept the hand of the Princess Amneris, but he refuses thus to purchase life and descends to the silent tomb where he finds *Aida* awaiting him. She had purposely concealed herself there in order to share his fate, and the two lovers die in each other's arms. This is intended to be tragical in the highest degree; but I cannot help thinking that the librettist here let slip a splendid opportunity, and that the true climax of the tragedy would be to have Radames at the last moment accept the hand of the princess, and *Aida*, having secretly sought the tomb

to die with him, be left to perish alone in the dark vaults, while the temple above is ablaze with light for the marriage of her rival and her faithless lover. However, I shall not insist upon this change being made at my suggestion.

Of the music the *Tribune* says:

"*Aida*" begins with a short and romantic Prelude, played chiefly by the violins, pianissimo, and dying away in a true Wagnerian phrase as the curtain rises upon the first act. The scene is a grand hall in the palace of Pharaoh, with a view of the Pyramids and distant palaces through the open colonnade at the back. An introductory dialogue between Radames and Ramfis leads to one of the brightest gems of the opera, the beautiful romanza, "Celeste *Aida*," which Signor Campanini sang with exquisite delicacy and expression. This is followed by a duet between Radames and Amneris, and the duet is charmed by the entrance of *Aida* to a trio, "Vieni, O diletto," both remarkable alike for tender feeling and for dramatic force, and most admirably constructed. The entrance of the King and his courtiers, priests, attendants, &c., brings us to one of those tremendous ensembles wherein Verdi always excels. The stirring martial strain, "Su del Nilo," gives the key to this number, which is wrought up to a magnificent effect. *Aida* then has a trying scena, followed by a delightful little cantabile, "Numi, pietà," entirely unlike Verdi's usual manner, and the scene changes to the interior of the Temple of Phthah, where Radames is to receive the consecrated arms before setting out upon his expedition. The whole of the number is a wonderful construction of scenic splendors and musical beauty and variety. The wondrous chorus of the priestesses behind the scene and the priests in front, the sacred dance, the impressive duo between Radames and Ramfis, all accord perfectly with the effect of rows of stupendous columns, floods of soft light, fumes of incense, and the glitter of gold and glory of scarlet and white robes. The curtain falls upon the invocation "Immenso Phtha, noi t'invochiam." In the second act we have first the Chamber of Amneris, with a female chorus, a comical dance of little black slaves, a delicious duet for Amneris and *Aida*, and a repetition of the martial chorus as the return of the victor is announced without. The second scene represents one of the gates of Thebes, with the entrance of the army, the King, the victorious general, and the captives, and this was so grandly arranged that it called forth long-continued plaudits. Besides the chorus, "Gloria all' Egitto," which was almost smothered by the brass instruments on the stage, a march and a ballet which, like the other two, is both curious and graceful, the most remarkable part is the prayer for quarter by Amonasro and the other prisoners, against which is contrasted the remonstrance of the priests and the plaintive cry of *Aida*. The finale is even stronger than that in the first Act. In Act third we have an exquisite piece of scenery, showing the Nile by moonlight, and the temple of Isis on a high rock by the bank, and here occur two grand duets, one being *Aida* and Amonasro, the other between *Aida* and Radames. In both these, with a great deal that is novel, we have decided reminiscences of Verdi's old style, without many of his old faults. The passage in the first duet, beginning "La tra foreste vergini" will be particularly admired. It is in this Act also that *Aida* has her beautiful romanza "O cieli azzurri." Act Fourth opens with a hall in the Palace serving as a vestibule to the subterranean tribunal. After the grand duet between Amneris and Radames, the disgraced general is led away to judgment, and the voices of the priests are heard pronouncing the sentence below. In the last scene of all the stage is divided into two floors. The upper represents the temple of Phthah, ablaze with lights and crowded with priests, priestesses, and people of the court. Below is the dark vault in which Radames has just been immured. The cast was as follows: *Aida*, Mlle. Torriani; Amneris, Miss Cary; Radames, Campanini; Ramfis, Nannetti; Amonasro, Maurel; The King, Scolaro.

The German Leiderkranz gave their first concert for the season at their pleasant hall on Sunday evening, Nov. 23d, and an interesting entertainment was given at Irving Hall on Friday Evening, Dec. 5th by the Mendelssohn Glee Club, on which occasion there was some excellent singing. Both concerts were thoroughly enjoyed by all who were so fortunate as to be present.

A. A. C.

Special Notices.

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You cannot sing this without laughing. Very pretty as well as merry.
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Well, let 'em dance, if they wish to! This is a good Galop—and Wall St. or the Stock Exchange is about the place for a "break down."
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